

VERTIGO



Bill WILLINGHAM • Michael ALLRED

FABLES 76

Nov 08

suggested for mature readers vertigocomics.com

NEW YORK CITY.

READY TO GO, POPS?

HAD ENOUGH BREAKFAST? GOOD EGGS, HUH? BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW I'D LEARNED TO COOK A PRETTY MEAN EGG IN MY TIME.

FABLETOWN.

HAD TO LEARN TO FEND FOR MYSELF ALL THOSE YEARS OUT ON THE ROAD LEADING THE VAGABOND LIFE, DIDN'T I?

BUT NO MORE WANDERING FOR YOU OR ME, POPS. THIS IS OUR HOME FROM NOW ON.

SO WHAT SAY WE GO OUT AND GET A GOOD LOOK AT IT?

AROUND THE TOWN

IN WHICH THE NEWEST MEMBER OF FABLETOWN GETS A LOOK AROUND HIS NEW HOME AND THE GOOD PEOPLE OF FABLETOWN GET THEIR FIRST LOOK AT HIM IN RETURN.

BILL WILLINGHAM
writer/creator

MICHAEL ALLRED
guest artist

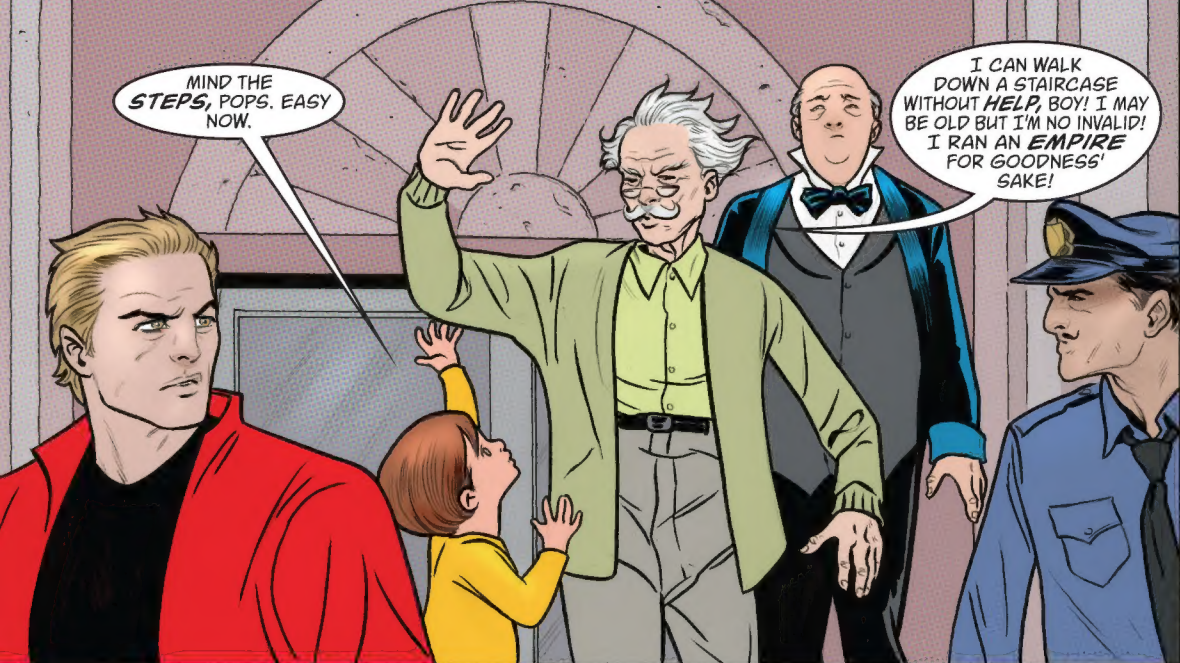
LAURA ALLRED
guest colorist

TODD KLEIN
letterer

JAMES JEAN
cover

ANGELA RUFINO
assistant editor

SHELLY BOND
editor





WHERE'S JACK KETCH WHEN YOU NEED HIM?

YOU SHOULD BE HANGED, YOU MONSTER!

PEPPE MUST GO!

TYRANT!

NO AMNESTY FOR MASS MURDERERS!

KILLER!

I KNEW WE WERE TRYING THIS TOO SOON.



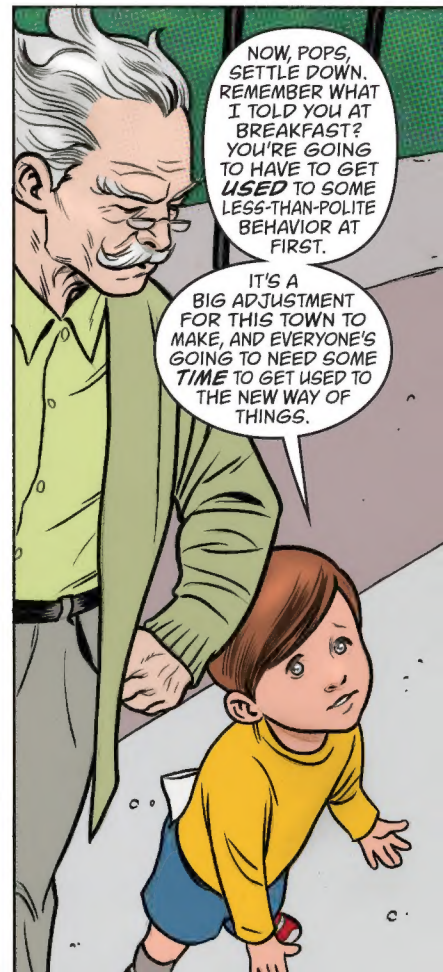
HOW DARE YOU?!

SPLAT



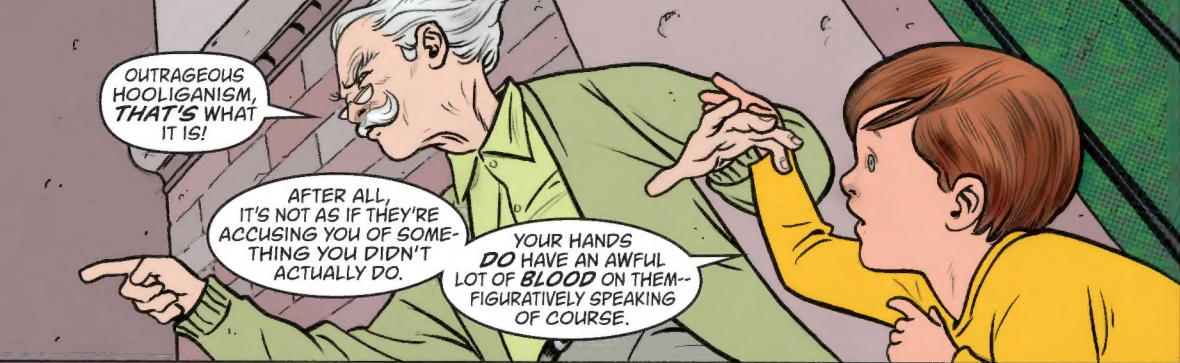
GUARDS, EXECUTE THAT MAN!

UH, MR. GEPPETTO, THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.



NOW, POPS, SETTLE DOWN. REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU AT BREAKFAST? YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET USED TO SOME LESS-THAN-POLITE BEHAVIOR AT FIRST.

IT'S A BIG ADJUSTMENT FOR THIS TOWN TO MAKE, AND EVERYONE'S GOING TO NEED SOME TIME TO GET USED TO THE NEW WAY OF THINGS.



OUTRAGEOUS HOOLIGANISM, THAT'S WHAT IT IS!

AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT AS IF THEY'RE ACCUSING YOU OF SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY DO.

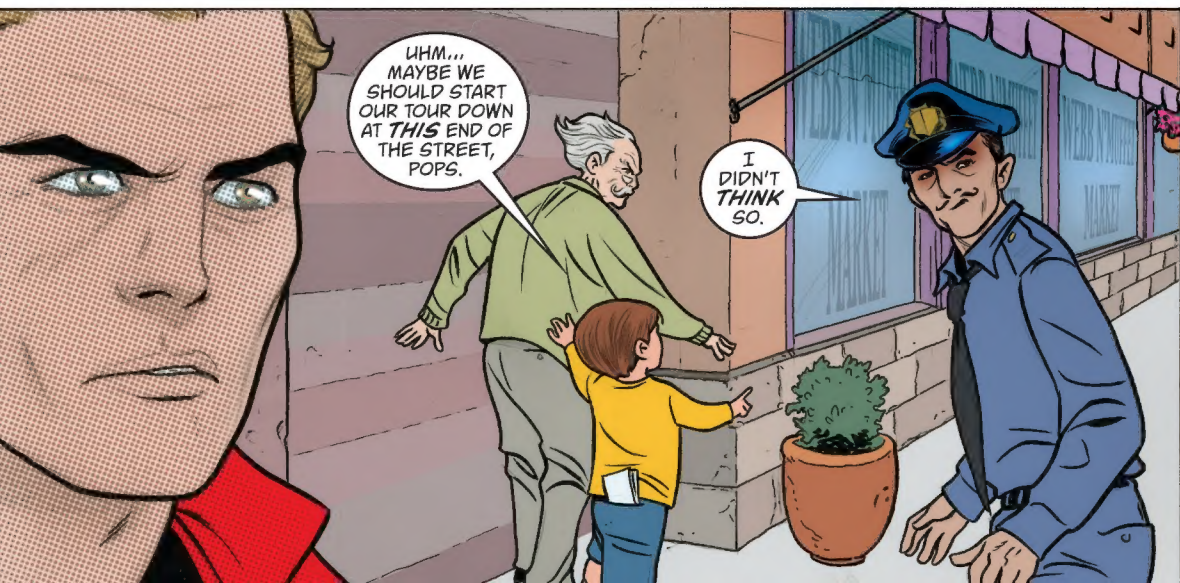
YOUR HANDS **DO** HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF **BLOOD** ON THEM-- FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING OF COURSE.



SETTLE DOWN, YOU LOT!

THERE'S GOING TO BE NO VIOLENCE HERE.

UNLESS YOU'RE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE THREE OF US IN OUR MORE **FORMIDABLE** ASPECTS.



UHM... MAYBE WE SHOULD START OUR TOUR DOWN AT **THIS** END OF THE STREET, POPS.

I DIDN'T THINK SO.



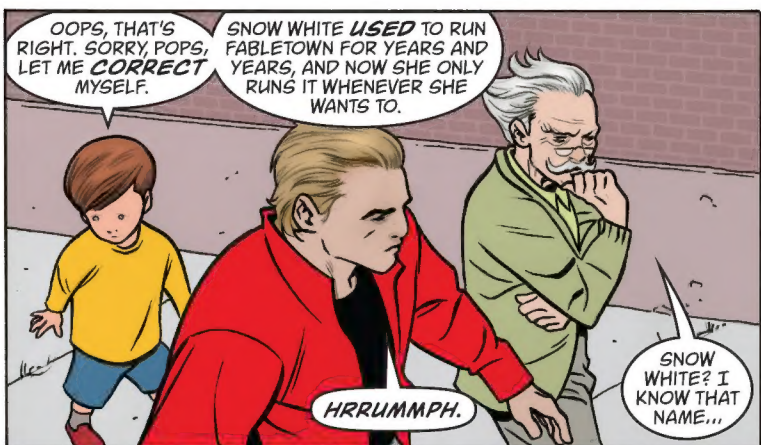
AND SEE THAT PRETTY LADY OVER THERE, POPS? THAT'S SNOW WHITE.

SHE BASICALLY **RUNS** FABLETOWN.



UHM...THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE ANYMORE. YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR SOME TIME, PINOCCHIO, SO YOU'RE NOT CAUGHT UP ON RECENT CHANGES.

BUT NOW MY **WIFE--**

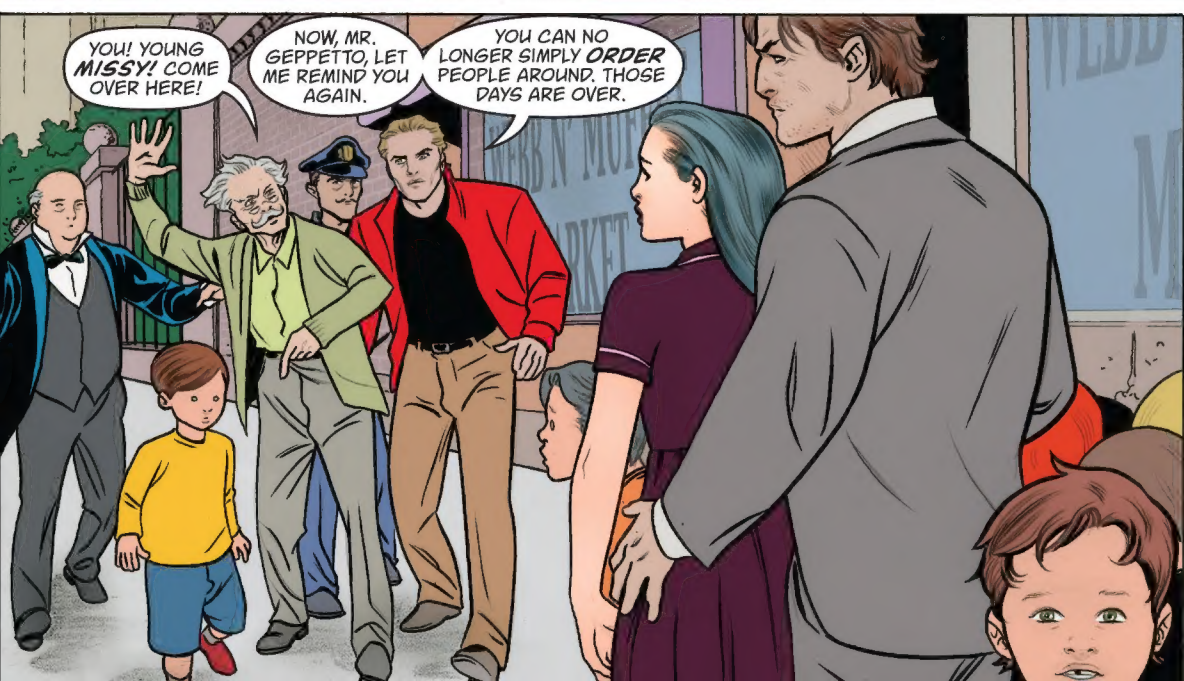


OOPS, THAT'S RIGHT. SORRY, POPS, LET ME **CORRECT** MYSELF.

SNOW WHITE **USED** TO RUN FABLETOWN FOR YEARS AND YEARS, AND NOW SHE ONLY RUNS IT WHENEVER SHE WANTS TO.

HRRUMMPH.

SNOW WHITE? I KNOW THAT NAME...



YOU! YOUNG MISSY! COME OVER HERE!

NOW, MR. GEPPETTO, LET ME REMIND YOU AGAIN.

YOU CAN NO LONGER SIMPLY **ORDER** PEOPLE AROUND. THOSE DAYS ARE OVER.



GOOD MORNING, GENTLEMEN. THAT CROWD BACK THERE GIVE YOU ANY TROUBLE?

NOTHING WE COULDN'T DEFLATE WITH A DEFTLY CHOSEN WORD OR TWO.

SO, WOMAN, I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO **WILLINGLY** LIES DOWN WITH THIS CUR.

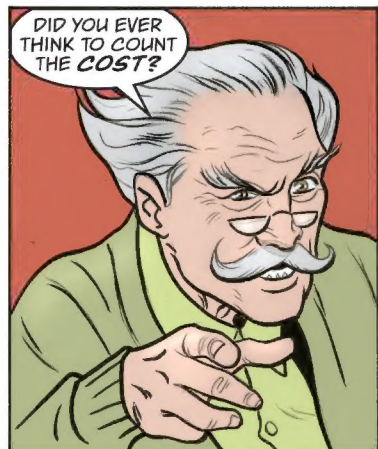
DISGUSTING.



EXCUSE ME?

AND NOW THEY SAY YOU LARGELY **RAN** THE WAR AGAINST ME.

WHY?



DID YOU EVER THINK TO COUNT THE **COST**?



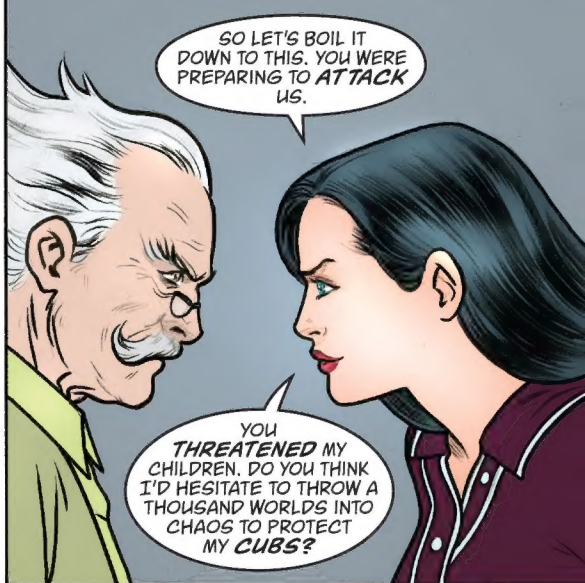
MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED HERETOFORE PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY WORLDS ARE SUDDENLY **LEADERLESS**. I IMAGINE THE LOCAL UPRISINGS MAY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN.

SUCH BLOODLETING THERE WILL BE. THE COMING DEATH TOLL WILL NUMBER IN THE--WELL, WHO CAN **SAY** ACCURATELY?



AS FAR AS I KNOW I NEVER HARMED YOU DIRECTLY. I NEVER SO MUCH AS LAID **EYES** ON YOU. WHAT DID I EVER DO TO EVOKE SUCH **UNLADYLIKE** TREATMENT FROM YOU?

OH, GEPPETTO, THERE ARE SO **MANY** RESPONSES THAT QUESTION DESERVES, BUT TIME'S SHORT AND I DON'T WANT TO SPOIL MY KIDS' BIG DAY ON THE TOWN.



SO LET'S BOIL IT DOWN TO THIS. YOU WERE PREPARING TO **ATTACK** US.

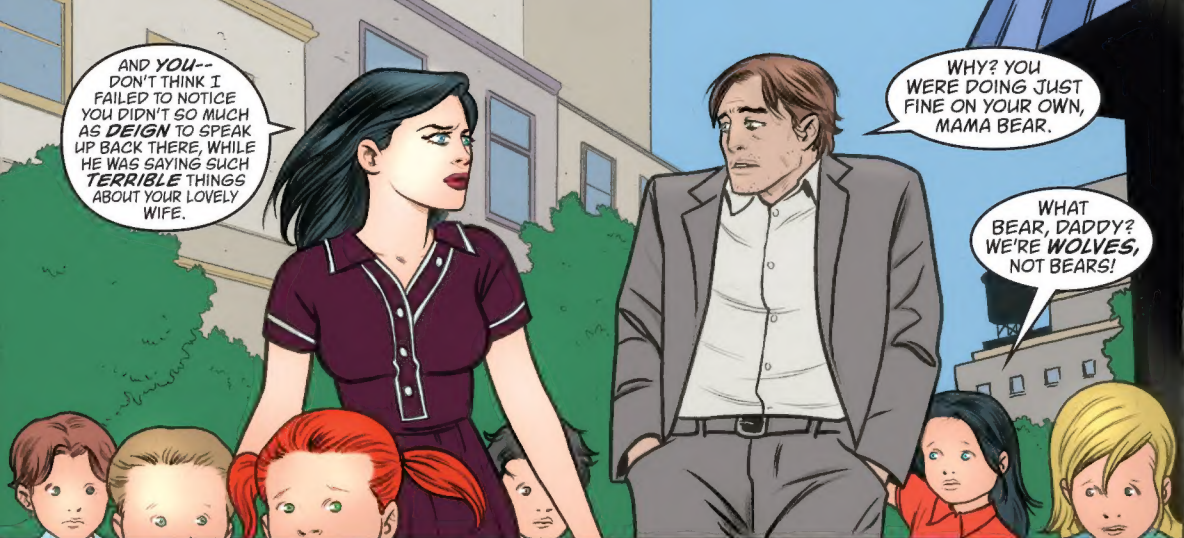
YOU **THREATENED** MY CHILDREN. DO YOU THINK I'D HESITATE TO THROW A THOUSAND WORLDS INTO CHAOS TO PROTECT MY **CUBS**?



NOW, COME ALONG, LITTLE MONSTERS. LET'S LEAVE THE TIRED OLD MAN ALONE.

IS HE A BAD MAN, MOMMY?

NOT ANYMORE. NOT OFFICIALLY. I'LL TEACH YOU ALL ABOUT THE GENERAL AMNESTY WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.



AND YOU-- DON'T THINK I FAILED TO NOTICE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE YOU DIDN'T SO MUCH AS *DEIGN* TO SPEAK UP BACK THERE, WHILE HE WAS SAYING SUCH *TERRIBLE* THINGS ABOUT YOUR LOVELY WIFE.

WHY? YOU WERE DOING JUST FINE ON YOUR OWN, MAMA BEAR.

WHAT BEAR, DADDY? WE'RE WOLVES, NOT BEARS!

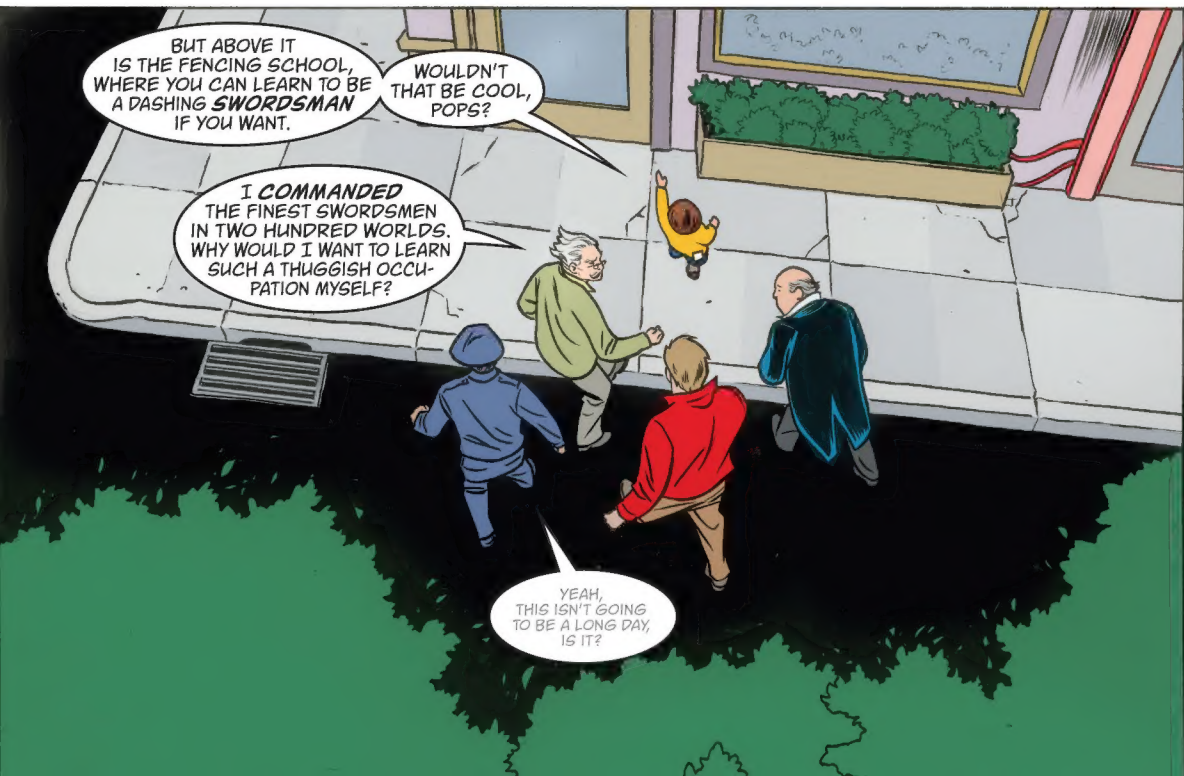


BESIDES, THE OLD DUFFER'S *TOOTHLESS* NOW.



NOW THIS IS THE GRAND GREEN FLORIST SHOP.

I DOUBT YOU'LL BE SENDING FLOWERS TO ANYONE ANY TIME SOON, SO I GUESS WE CAN *SKIP* GOING IN HERE.

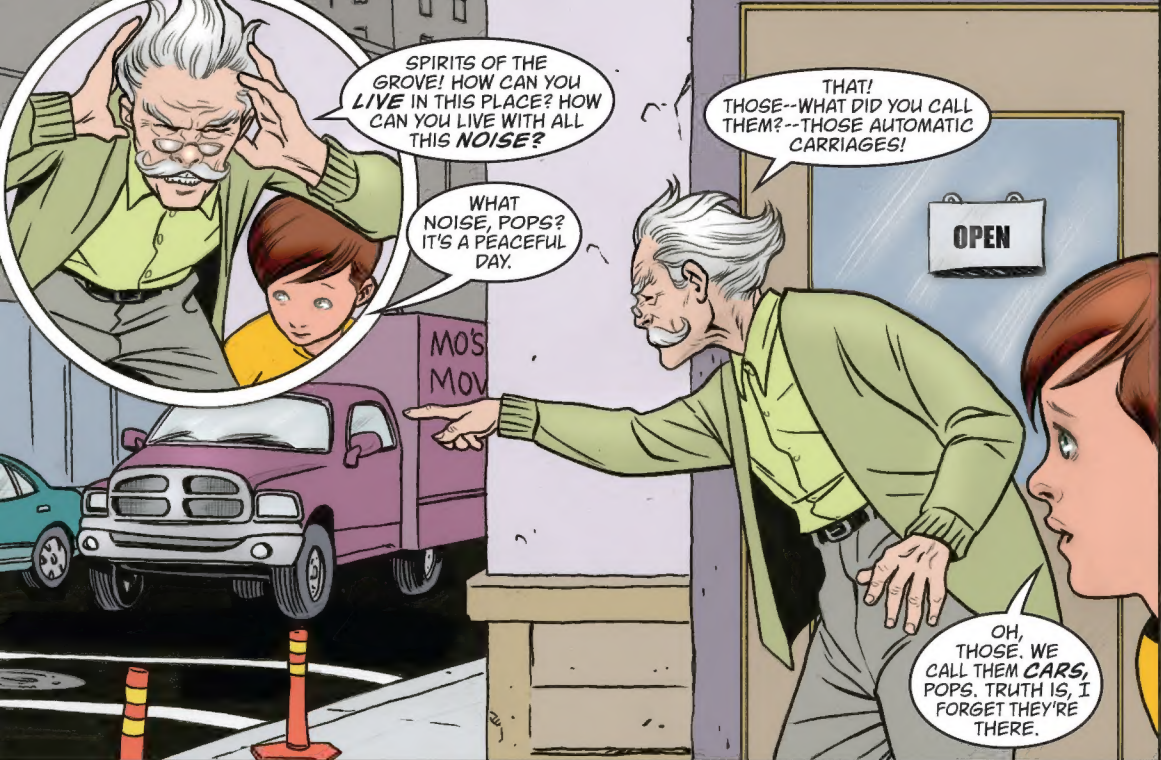


BUT ABOVE IT IS THE FENCING SCHOOL, WHERE YOU CAN LEARN TO BE A DASHING *SWORDSMAN* IF YOU WANT.

WOULDN'T THAT BE COOL, POPS?

I *COMMANDED* THE FINEST SWORDSMEN IN TWO HUNDRED WORLDS. WHY WOULD I WANT TO LEARN SUCH A THUGGISH OCCUPATION MYSELF?

YEAH, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE A LONG DAY, IS IT?

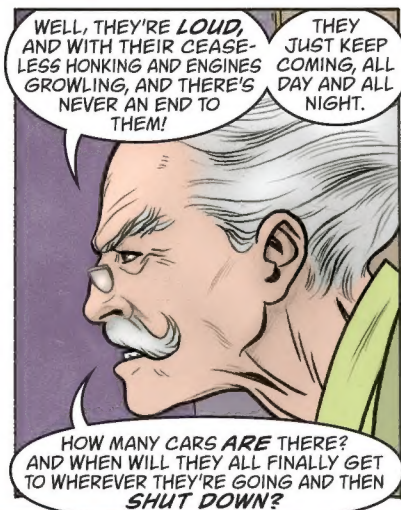


SPIRITS OF THE GROVE! HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN THIS PLACE? HOW CAN YOU LIVE WITH ALL THIS NOISE?

WHAT NOISE, POPS? IT'S A PEACEFUL DAY.

THAT! THOSE--WHAT DID YOU CALL THEM?--THOSE AUTOMATIC CARRIAGES!

OH, THOSE. WE CALL THEM **CARS**, POPS. TRUTH IS, I FORGET THEY'RE THERE.



WELL, THEY'RE LOUD, AND WITH THEIR CEASELESS HONKING AND ENGINES GROWLING, AND THERE'S NEVER AN END TO THEM!

THEY JUST KEEP COMING, ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT.

HOW MANY CARS ARE THERE? AND WHEN WILL THEY ALL FINALLY GET TO WHEREVER THEY'RE GOING AND THEN SHUT DOWN?



WELCOME TO THE MODERN MUNDY WORLD, OLD MAN.

YOU SEE, POPS, IT'S LIKE THIS--

AND THE OTHER NOISES!



SEVENTEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF MUSIC FROM SEVENTEEN DIFFERENT WINDOWS!

WHY CAN'T EVERYONE SETTLE ON ONE SONG AT A TIME AND PLAY THAT?



WELL, PEOPLE LIKE THEIR RADIOS AND STEREOS AND TV SETS.

MACHINES! TOO MANY DAMNED MACHINES!

SERIOUSLY, ONCE YOU LEARN TO TUNE THESE THINGS OUT, LIKE THE **REST** OF US, YOU'LL SEE WHAT A NICE, REASONABLY QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD THIS IS.

--SO THEN I SAID TO HER, NUH-UH, AND SHE SAID BACK TO ME, YEAH-HUH.

AND OF COURSE I SAID RIGHT BACK, NUH-UH, BUT SHE SAID YEAH-HUH, SO OF COURSE THAT'S WHEN I SAID--

AND THE TELEPHONE MACHINES. THEY'RE THE **WORST!**



I CONTROLLED OVER TWO HUNDRED WORLDS, WITHOUT NEEDING TO TALK TO MORE THAN ONE OR TWO PEOPLE ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

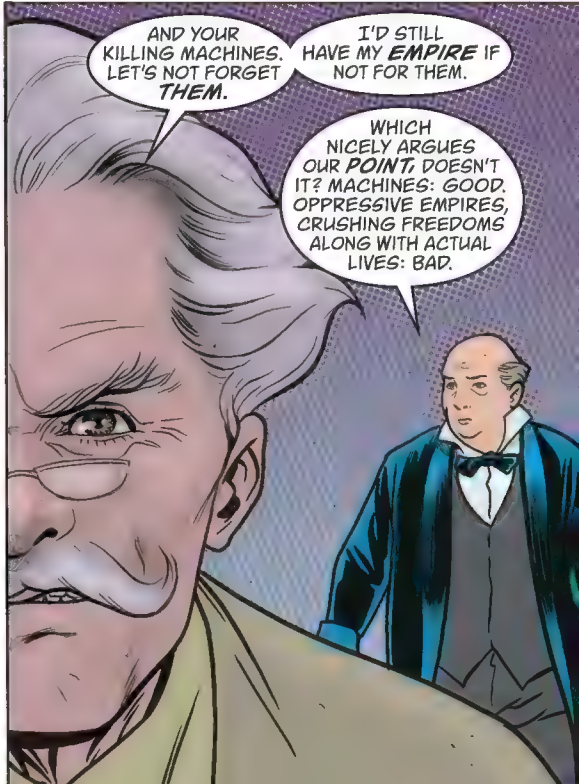
IF I DIDN'T NEED A TELEPHONE MACHINE TO DO **THAT**, HOW COULD ANYONE NEED ONE FOR **ANY** REASON?



AND YET EVERYONE ON THIS BLIGHTED WORLD OWNS ONE, AND OH, HOW THEY CHATTER.

JUST LIKE THAT TAWDRY WOMAN. SHE HAS ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** IN NEED OF SAYING, BUT SEEMS DETERMINED TO SPEND THE ENTIRE **DAY** SAYING IT.

NUH-UH!



AND YOUR KILLING MACHINES. LET'S NOT FORGET **THEM**.

I'D STILL HAVE MY **EMPIRE** IF NOT FOR THEM.

WHICH NICELY ARGUES OUR **POINT**, DOESN'T IT? MACHINES: **GOOD**. OPPRESSIVE EMPIRES, CRUSHING FREEDOMS ALONG WITH ACTUAL LIVES: **BAD**.



HAVE FUN OUT IN THE MUNDY.

WE WILL. WE'VE GOT A WHOLE BIG DAY PLANNED.



ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED ME TO GO WITH? THIS IS THEIR FIRST FULL TRIAL AS **NORMAL** KIDS. I COULD ALWAYS TELL KING COLE TO DO WITHOUT ME.

NONSENSE. GO TO YOUR MEETING. WE'LL BE FINE. THESE CUBS ARE TRAINED BY NOW, OR THEY'LL **NEVER** BE. AND WE'LL ALL BE PERFECTLY SAFE WITH GHOST ALONG.

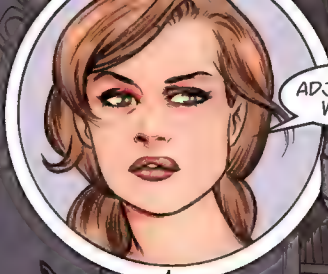
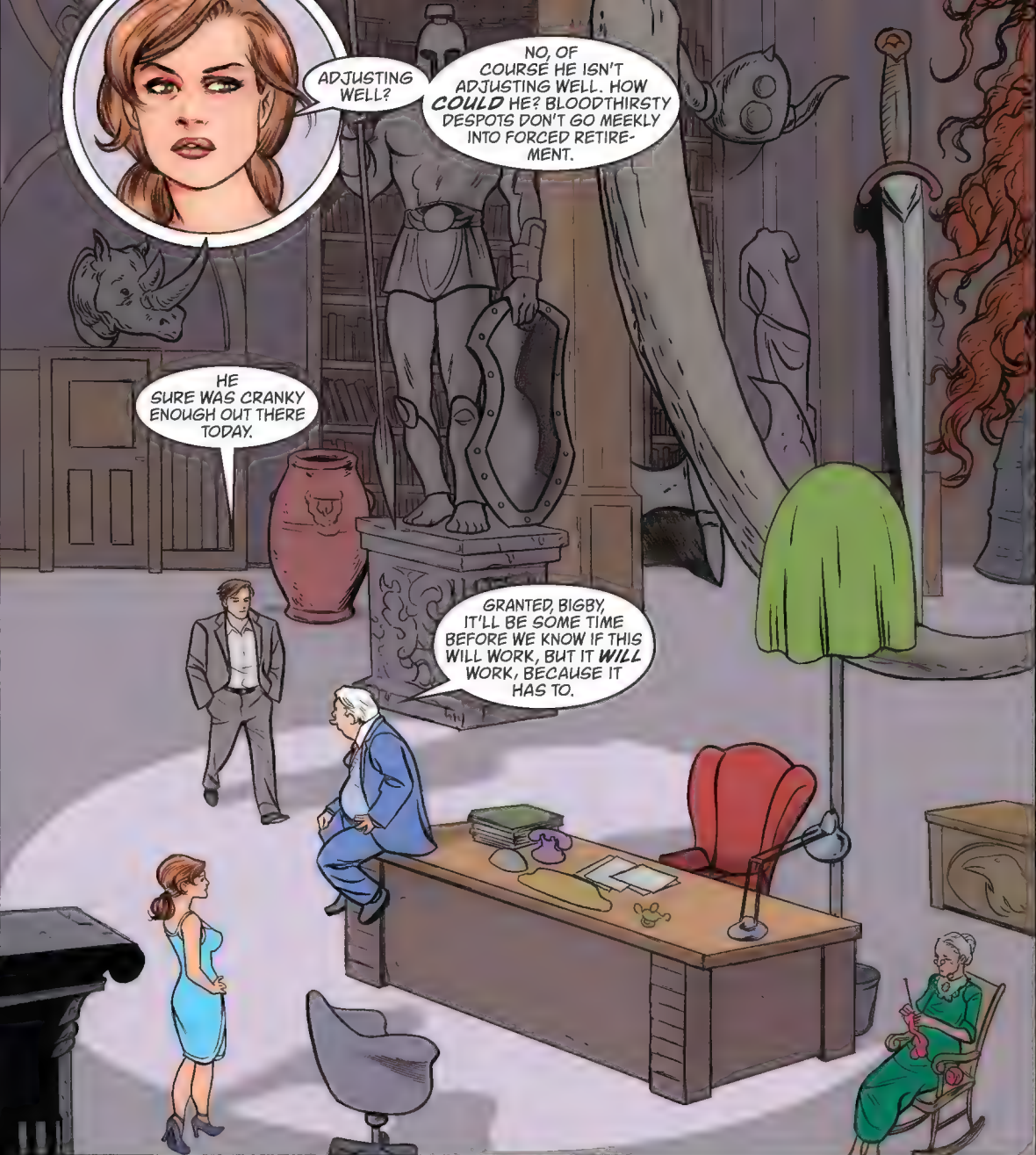


HAVE FUN!

MIND YOUR MOTHER!



HOW ABOUT SOME CANDY, POPS? ON ME.



ADJUSTING WELL?

NO, OF COURSE HE ISN'T ADJUSTING WELL. HOW **COULD** HE? BLOODTHIRSTY DESPOTS DON'T GO MEEKLY INTO FORCED RETIREMENT.

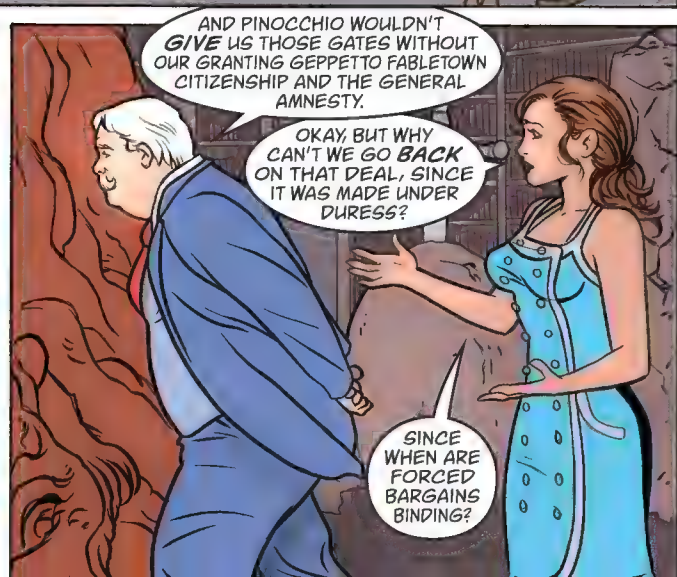
HE SURE WAS CRANKY ENOUGH OUT THERE TODAY.

GRANTED, BIGBY, IT'LL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE KNOW IF THIS WILL WORK, BUT IT **WILL** WORK, BECAUSE IT HAS TO.



WE MADE A DEAL AND WE HAVE TO STICK TO IT.

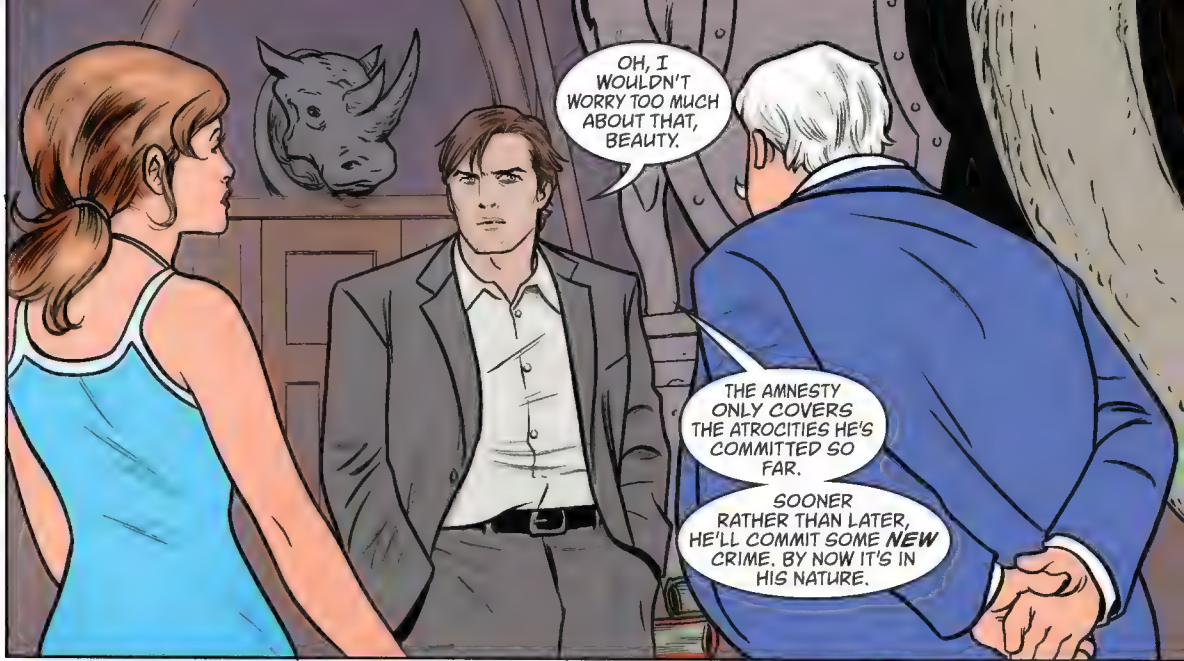
WITHOUT THE LOCATION OF THOSE FIVE HIDDEN GATES, WE WOULDN'T HAVE COMPLETED JACK KETCH, AND THEREBY LOST THE WAR.



AND PINOCCHIO WOULDN'T **GIVE** US THOSE GATES WITHOUT OUR GRANTING GEPPETTO FABLETOWN CITIZENSHIP AND THE GENERAL AMNESTY.

OKAY, BUT WHY CAN'T WE GO **BACK** ON THAT DEAL, SINCE IT WAS MADE UNDER DURESS?

SINCE WHEN ARE FORCED BARGAINS BINDING?



OH, I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT THAT, BEAUTY.

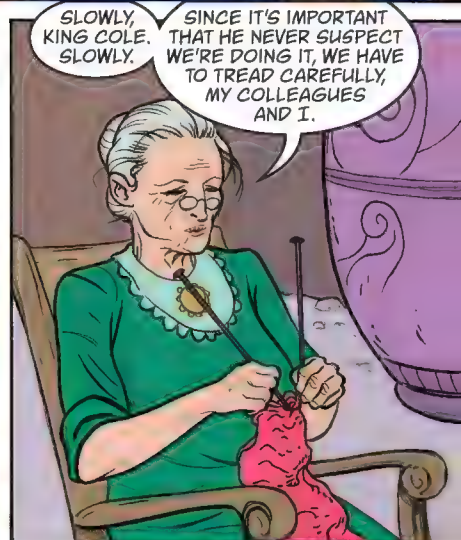
THE AMNESTY ONLY COVERS THE ATROCITIES HE'S COMMITTED SO FAR.

SOONER RATHER THAN LATER, HE'LL COMMIT SOME **NEW** CRIME. BY NOW IT'S IN HIS NATURE.



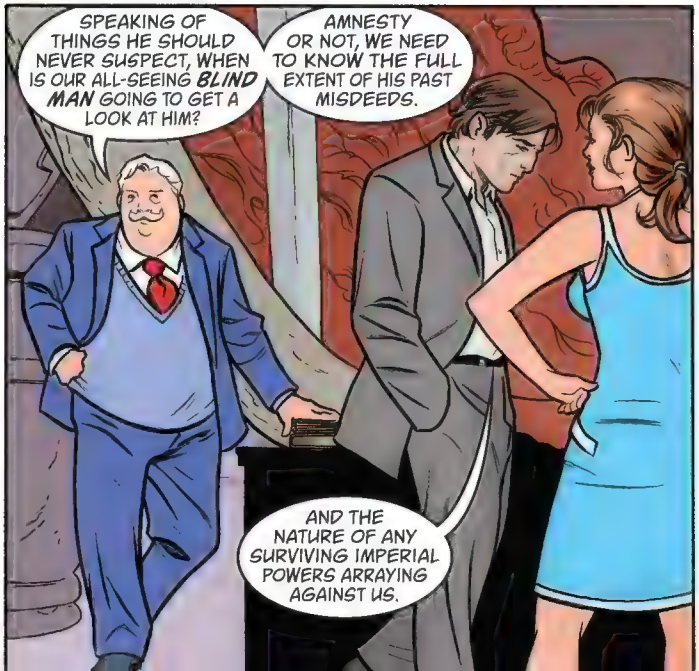
THEN WE CAN **AX** THE OLD DUFFER WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

ASSUMING WE'RE ACTUALLY **ABLE** TO KILL HIM. FRAU TOTENKINDER, HOW GOES THE EFFORT TO DISMANTLE HIS MAGICAL PROTECTIONS?



SLOWLY, KING COLE. SLOWLY.

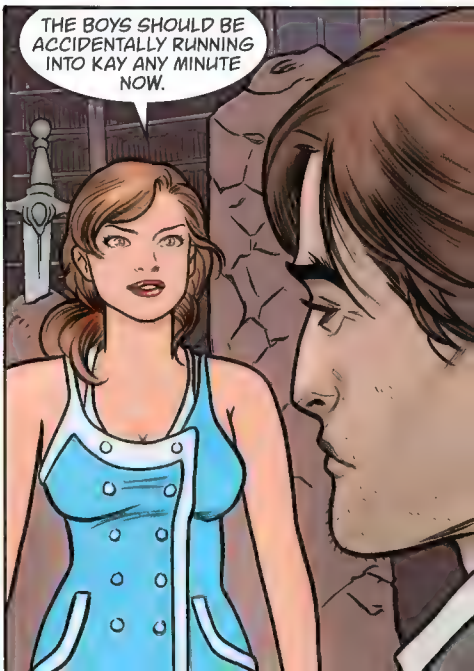
SINCE IT'S IMPORTANT THAT HE NEVER SUSPECT WE'RE DOING IT, WE HAVE TO TREAD CAREFULLY, MY COLLEAGUES AND I.



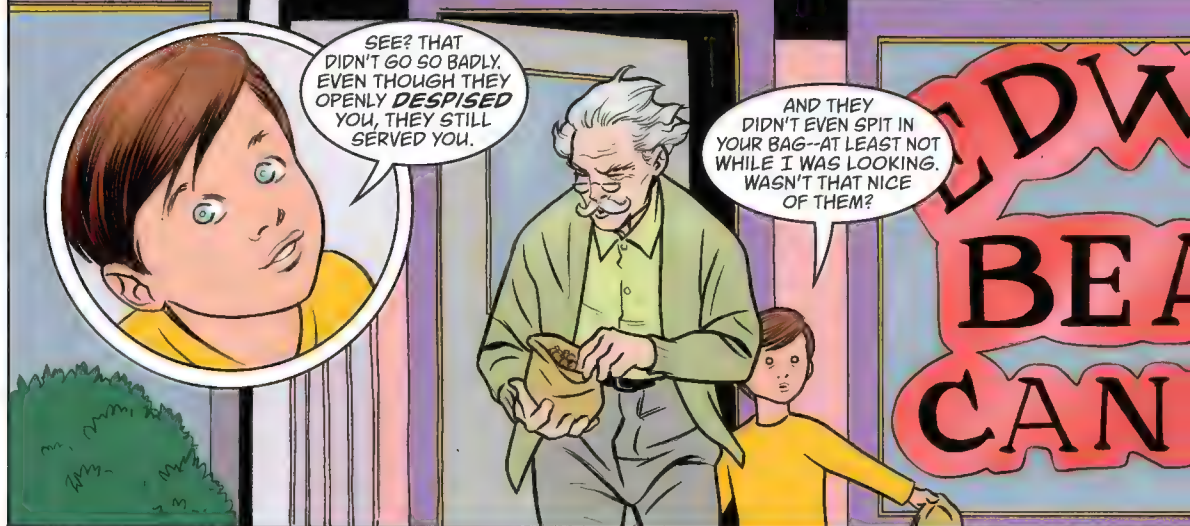
SPEAKING OF THINGS HE SHOULD NEVER SUSPECT, WHEN IS OUR ALL-SEEING **BLIND MAN** GOING TO GET A LOOK AT HIM?

AMNESTY OR NOT, WE NEED TO KNOW THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS PAST MISDEEDS.

AND THE NATURE OF ANY SURVIVING IMPERIAL POWERS ARRAYING AGAINST US.

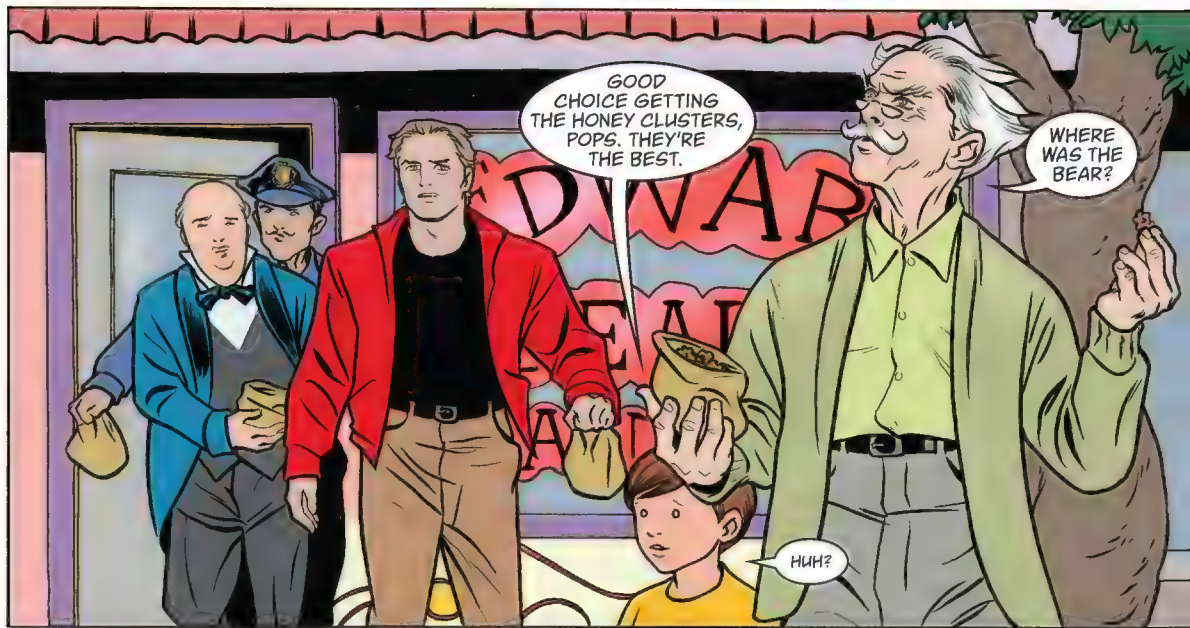


THE BOYS SHOULD BE ACCIDENTALLY RUNNING INTO KAY ANY MINUTE NOW.



SEE? THAT DIDN'T GO SO BADLY. EVEN THOUGH THEY OPENLY *DESPISED* YOU, THEY STILL SERVED YOU.

AND THEY DIDN'T EVEN SPIT IN YOUR BAG--AT LEAST NOT WHILE I WAS LOOKING. WASN'T THAT NICE OF THEM?



GOOD CHOICE GETTING THE HONEY CLUSTERS, POPS. THEY'RE THE BEST.

WHERE WAS THE BEAR?

HUH?



THAT SIGN SAYS A BEAR OWNS THE SHOP BUT I DIDN'T SEE ONE. I ALWAYS LIKED TALKING BEARS.

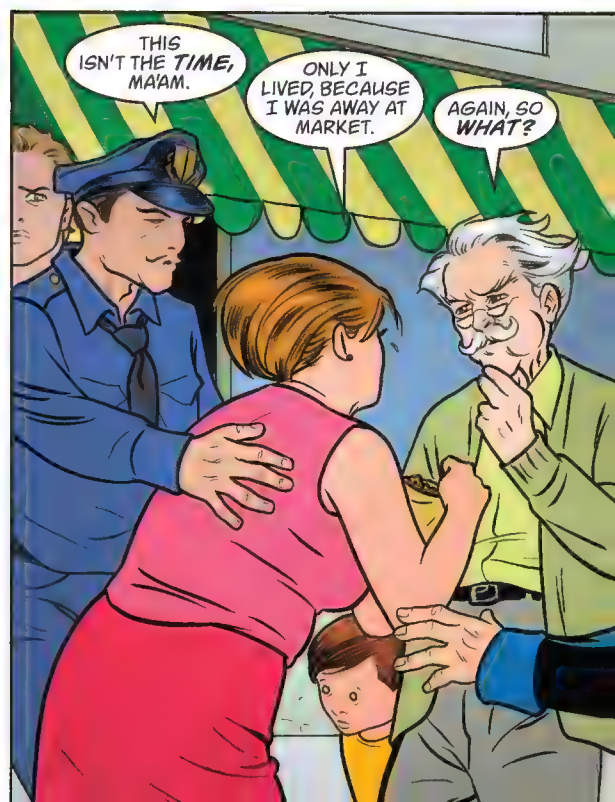
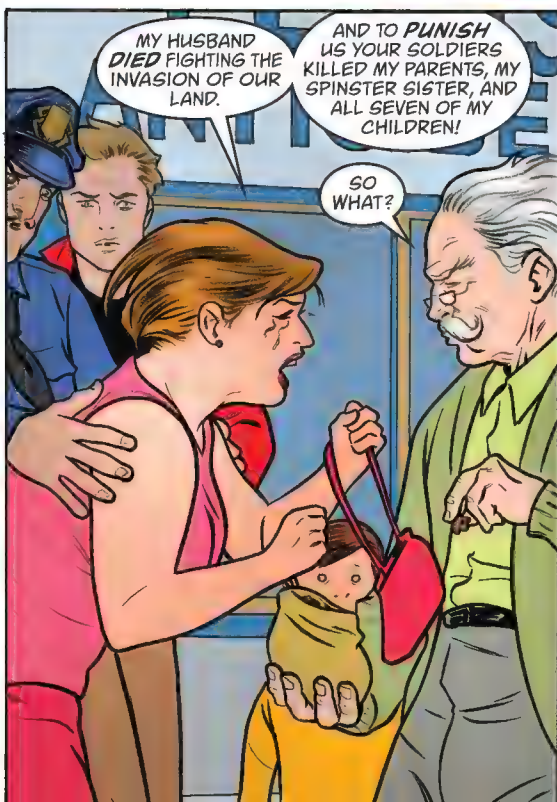
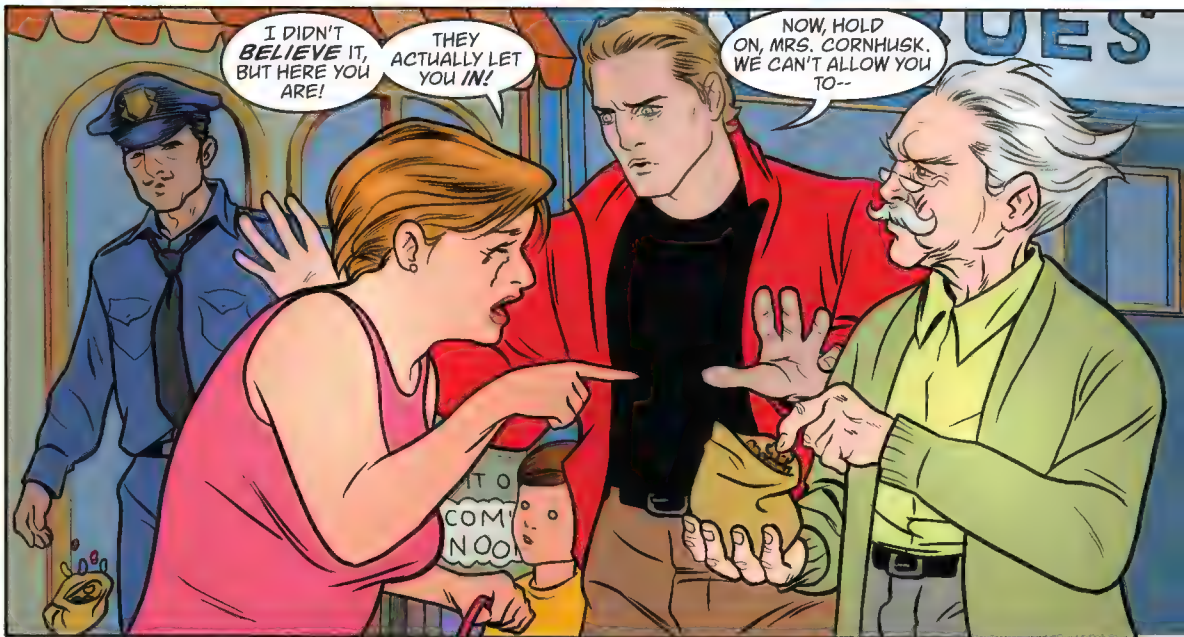
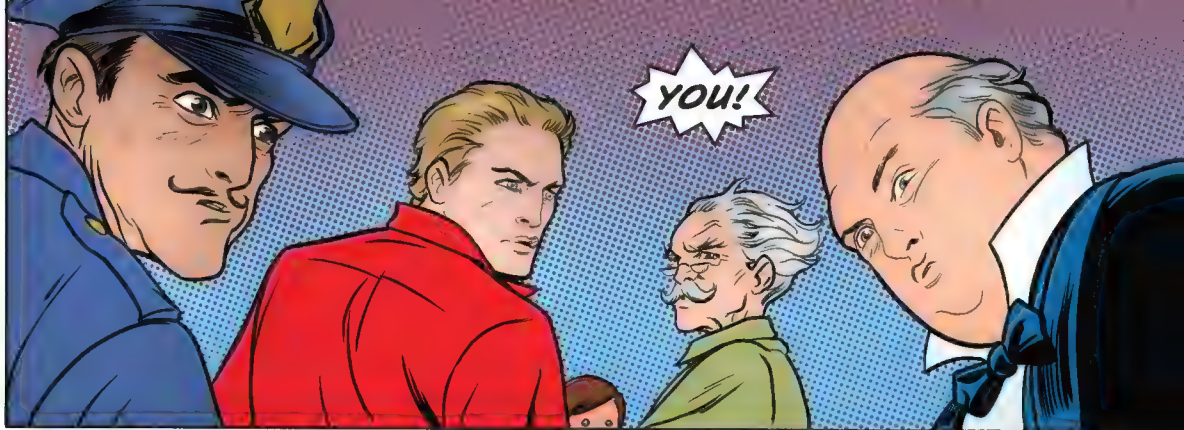
EVERY YEAR WHEN THE MENAGERIE WOULD COME UP TO MY COTTAGE--

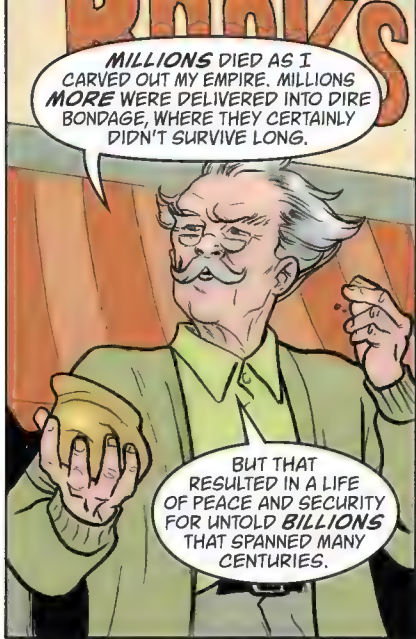
UHM--WE DON'T ALLOW ANIMAL FABLES DOWN HERE IN THE CITY, POPS. I'M NOT SURE IF A BEAR ACTUALLY *OWNS* THE SHOP, BUT IF HE DOES, HE DOES IT FROM A DISTANCE.



OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU KEEP YOUR ANIMAL FABLES IMPRISONED ON A FARM, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE COMMITTED *NO CRIMES* WHATSOEVER.

SOMETIMES I FORGET THAT YOU WERE THE GRAND AND NOBLE EGALITARIANS, WHILE I WAS THE EVIL OPPRESSOR.





MILLIONS DIED AS I CARVED OUT MY EMPIRE. MILLIONS MORE WERE DELIVERED INTO DIRE BONDAGE, WHERE THEY CERTAINLY DIDN'T SURVIVE LONG.

BUT THAT RESULTED IN A LIFE OF PEACE AND SECURITY FOR UNTOLD BILLIONS THAT SPANNED MANY CENTURIES.



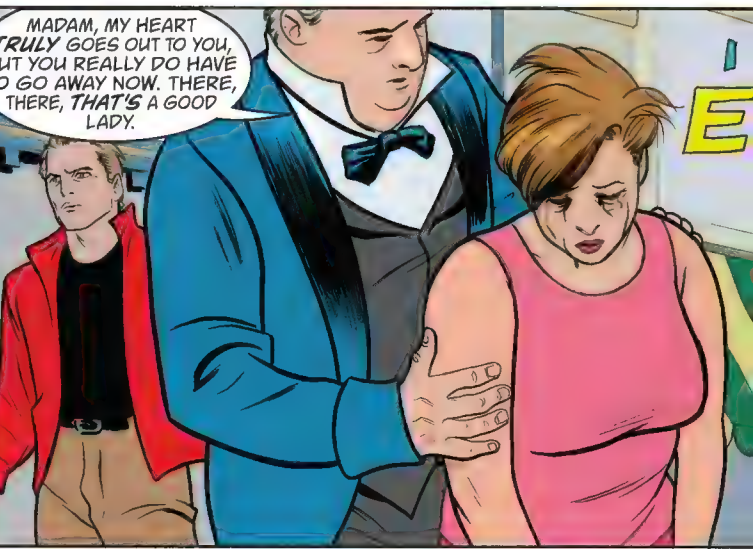
WHO ELSE HAS EVER ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH? WHEN AGAIN WILL SO MANY ENJOY SUCH WIDESPREAD SAFETY FOR SO LONG?

YOU'RE A MONSTER! A BLOODY-HANDED MONSTER!

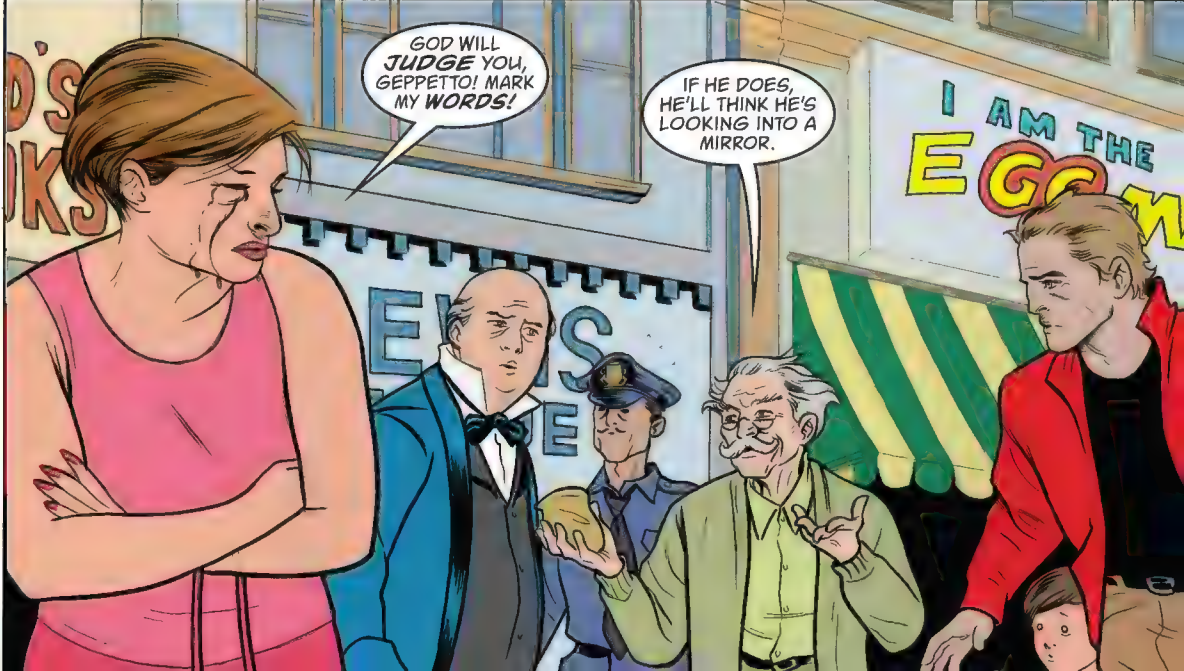
OF COURSE.



NO KIND MAN COULD EVER DO WHAT I'VE DONE. THE COMPASSIONATE MAN WILL LET BILLIONS SUFFER AND DIE, AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T HAVE TO GET HIS HANDS DIRTY.



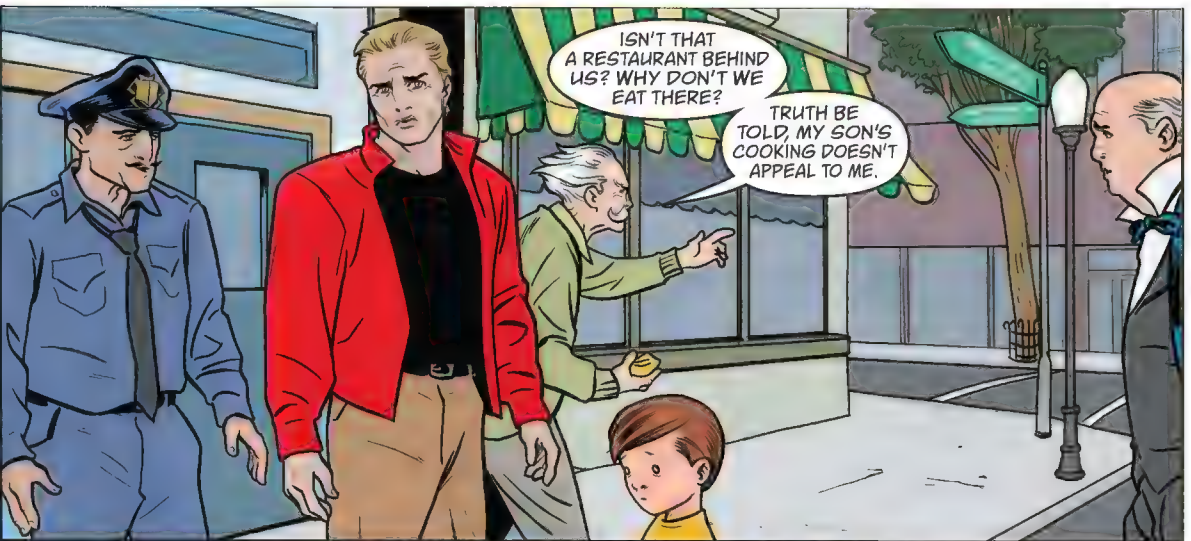
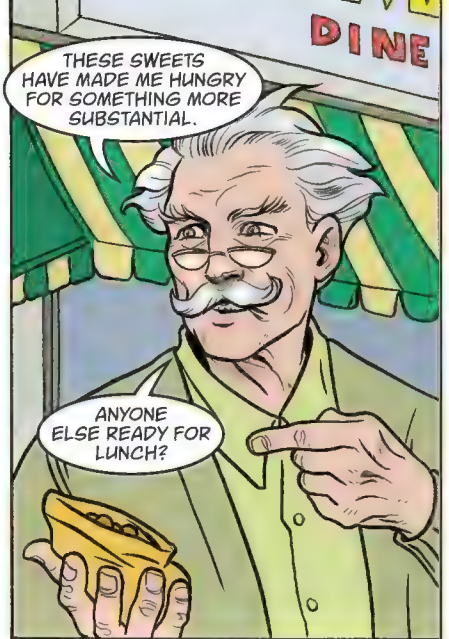
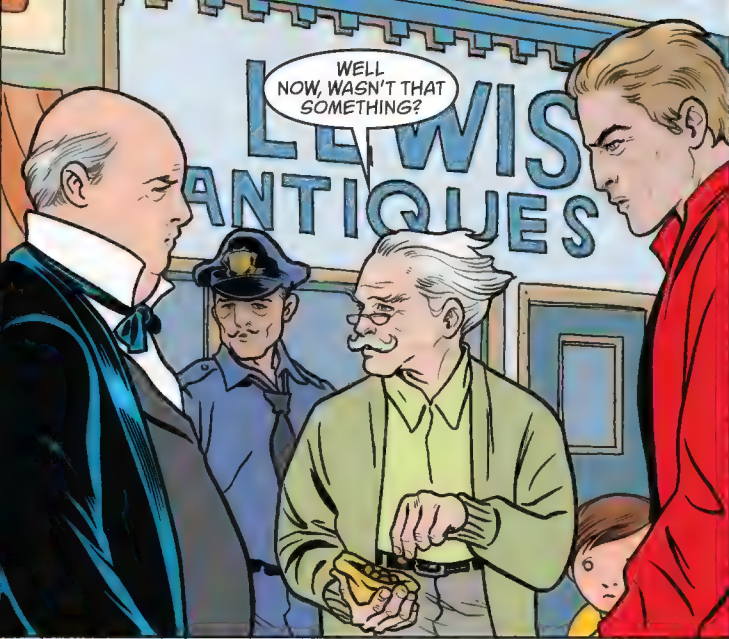
MADAM, MY HEART TRULY GOES OUT TO YOU, BUT YOU REALLY DO HAVE TO GO AWAY NOW. THERE, THAT'S A GOOD LADY.

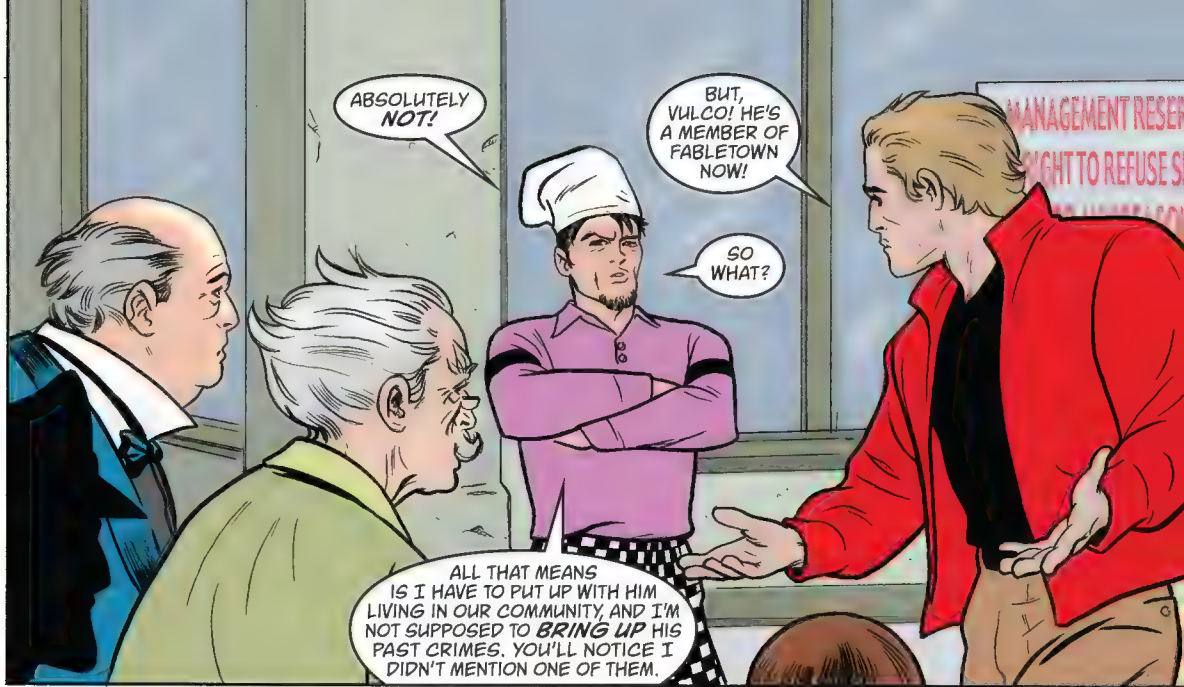


GOD WILL JUDGE YOU, GEPPETTO! MARK MY WORDS!

IF HE DOES, HE'LL THINK HE'S LOOKING INTO A MIRROR.

I AM THE EGG





ABSOLUTELY NOT!

BUT, VULCO! HE'S A MEMBER OF FABLETOWN NOW!

SO WHAT?

ALL THAT MEANS IS I HAVE TO PUT UP WITH HIM LIVING IN OUR COMMUNITY, AND I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BRING UP HIS PAST CRIMES. YOU'LL NOTICE I DIDN'T MENTION ONE OF THEM.



BUT NOTHING IN FABLETOWN LAW REQUIRES ME TO FEED HIM, OR EVEN ALLOW HIM INTO MY DINER.



SEE THAT NOTICE? "THE MANAGEMENT"--THAT'S ME-- "RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE FOR ANY REASON."

AND UNLIKE OUT IN THE MUNDY, OUR PRIVATE POLICIES STILL HAVE SOME TOOTH BEHIND THEM. YOU CAN'T SUE ME FOR MAKING YOU FEEL BAD.

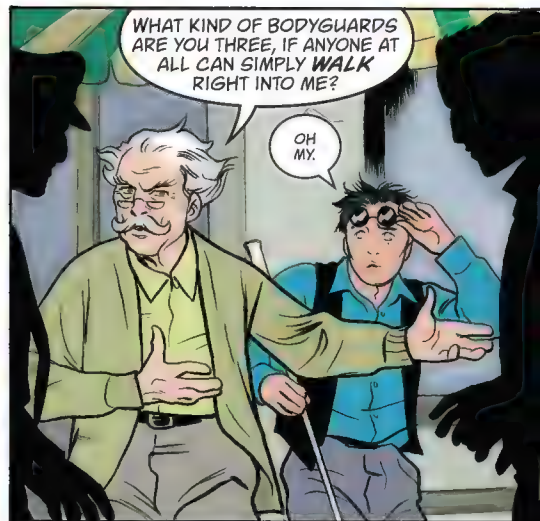
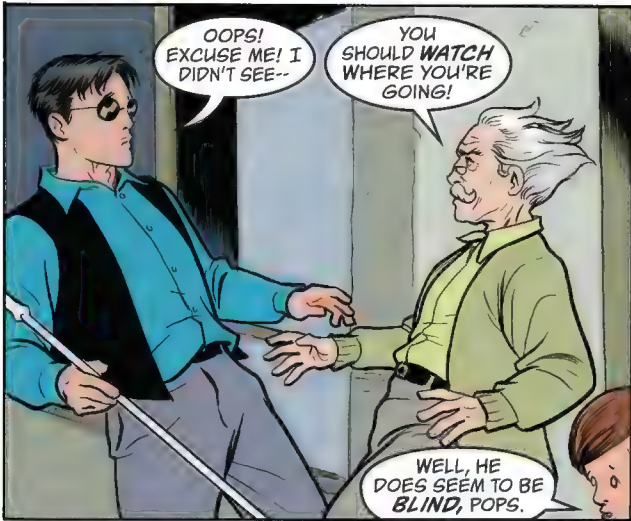
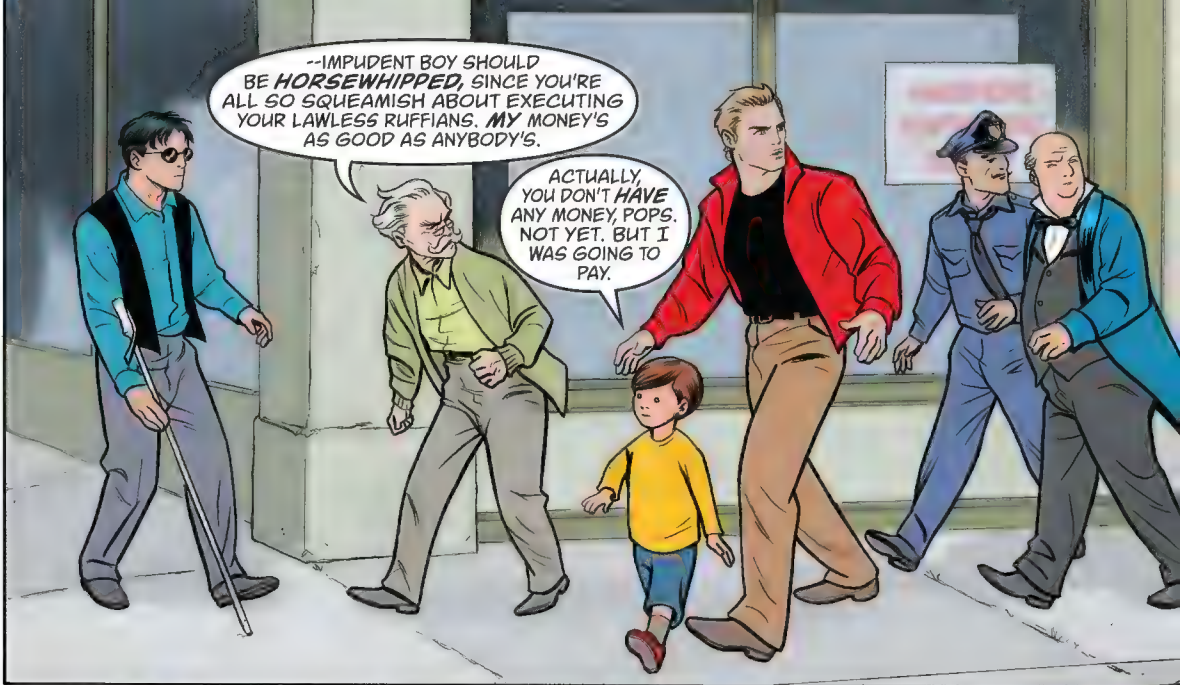


AND DON'T BOTHER TRYING THE BRANSTOCK, OR THE YELLOW BRICK ROADHOUSE NEITHER.

WE'VE ALREADY PLEDGED TO STAND TOGETHER ON THIS.

GO OUT INTO THE MUNDY IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, OLD MAN. YOU'LL NEVER FIND SO MUCH AS A CRUMB TO EAT HERE--NOT AS LONG AS I OWN THE EGGMAN.

GLASS SLIPPER STORE





SO MANY.



A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

WELL, THIS DAY COULD HAVE GONE BETTER, I SUPPOSE.

BUT IT WASN'T A TOTAL DISASTER. NO ONE QUITE *LYNCHED* US, AND WHO KNOWS? IN A FEW WEEKS THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY GET USED TO SEEING US EVERY DAY.

SO, POPS, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TOMORROW?

I WAS THINKING WE MIGHT WANT TO VENTURE OUT INTO THE MUNDY.

IT'S A REALLY GREAT CITY AND WE WON'T NEED THE BODYGUARDS OUT THERE, SINCE THE MUNDYS DON'T KNOW YOU FROM ADAM.

THEY HAVE SOME AMAZING RESTAURANTS, AND A GREAT BIG PARK, AND WE COULD GO SIGHTSEEING.

YOU COULD SEE ALL THE EVIDENCE FIRST HAND ON WHY WE'D NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONQUER THE MUNDY WORLD. OH, HOW THEY WOULD HAVE *SO* KICKED OUR ASSES!

HRRMPH!

OOH, THEY EVEN HAVE AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER--A REAL ONE--THAT WE CAN GO ON AND LOOK AT ALL OF THE FIGHTER JETS AND BOMBERS AND STUFF. WOULDN'T *THAT* BE COOL?

NEXT: LIFE AFTER EMPIRE

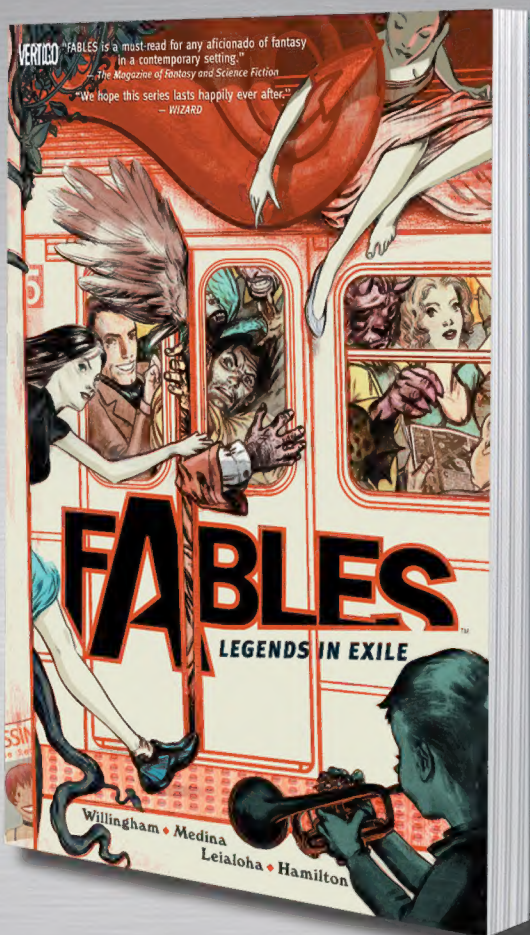
"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

BILL WILLINGHAM

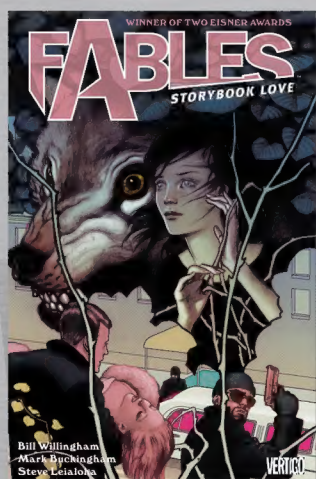
"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."
– THE WASHINGTON POST



- VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE
- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



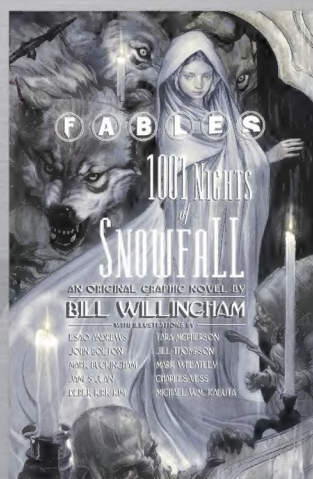
FABLES VOL. 3:
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